



NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

BUILDING STRONG®

For Immediate Release:
Oct. 8, 2012

Contact:
Karla Marshall
karla.k.marshall@usace.army.mil

USACE gives Wounded Warriors on Kandahar Airfield a little slice of home

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – U.S. Army Corps of Engineers employees support recovering Wounded Warriors on Kandahar Airfield by donating items and volunteering to host Wounded Warriors on the Afghanistan Engineer District-South compound for movie night, game night, holiday celebrations and inpromptu get-togethers.

Beginning in early 2011, USACE employees saw a way to give back to their community on Kandahar Airfield by donating items to the wounded servicemembers who arrive at KAF for medical treatment, said Laurel Stevens who heads the South District's employee activity committee.



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers employees, recovering Soldiers and 1972nd Medical Detachment personnel got together for a cookout hosted by the 1972nd Sept. 29 at the Wounded Warrior Recovery Center on Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan. (USACE Photo by Karla Marshall)

“District employees donated bedding, toiletries, reflective belts, sunglasses, and other items to the recovering Soldiers because when they arrived by medivac, they only had the uniform they came in,” Stevens explained.

As more employees became aware of the Wounded Warriors and their needs, district employees sought other ways to help the Soldiers with recovery.

“Last Memorial Day, we invited the recovering Soldiers to participate in our holiday barbque,” said Sarah White, an administrative assistant deployed from Liberty, Texas. “We picked the Soldiers up in our van, brought them to our compound, ate together, played board games and spent time getting to know them.”

More than a year later, and despite personnel redeployments at the South District, the frequent get-togethers continue with game and movie nights as well as other special events.

“I really enjoy spending time with the Warriors,” said Ingrid Burnette who deployed to Afghanistan in February from the USACE Huntington District. “It's rewarding to see smiles on their faces. They love to come over because they can relax, get away and get delicious treats. When new wounded come in, it's a lot of persuasion, like pulling teeth, to get them over at first. They are out of their element. Once we get them over and they see a somewhat normal atmosphere, they look forward to coming over.”

White said that her contribution to the Wounded Warriors is doing what comes naturally. “I like to think we help them forget where they are for a couple of hours and treat them like a guest in our home where they want for nothing.”

There are plenty of opportunities for other district employees to join in the efforts, said Burnette. “Just show up for one of the scheduled get togethers. Listen, engage, and share yourself with the Wounded Warriors.”

If people are uncomfortable giving their time, they can donate items instead.

“If someone is interested in donating, they just need to contact Alana Hoye, Lt. Lewis or Triet Bui. They are the district employees who have really stepped up in that aspect,” Burnette continued.

South District employees plan to sponsor another 5-kilometer race event to raise funds for the Wounded Warriors on KAF as they did in the past. Plus they continue to coordinate with their friends and families in the U.S. for specific donated items.

Other employees carried their desire to help Wounded Warriors with them to KAF. “My interest started in Louisville, Ky., when I became the project manager for the Sgt. Maj. William E. Sumner Warrior Transition Complex at Fort Knox,” said Veronica Rife. “That project made me aware of the need our Soldiers have for support and it was completed shortly after I arrived in Afghanistan.”

Rife also supports Marines with post-traumatic stress disorders and traumatic brain injuries through a non-profit organization sponsored by her church. “Our church sponsors a motorcycle ride to raise funds for Marines to get help with PTSD and TBI. Coming to Afghanistan and continuing to help young service members is something I feel strongly about doing.”

Along with Stevens, White, Burnette and Rife, other district employees who regularly give their free time to support the Wounded Warriors include Triet Bui, Wanda Coats-Flowers, Carolyn Imhoff-Hoffelder, Gale Ross, Trisha Yates, Dennis Lindemeyer, Kevin Pace, Alana Hoye, Navy Lt. William Lewis, Adam Walker and Bryan McCabe.

“USACE employees have a history of giving back to their community,” said Col. Vincent Quarles, South District commander. “To bring this tradition here to Afghanistan enriches the lives of all who receive and those who give back. I’m proud of our South District family and encourage everyone to continue to support our Heroes who are recovering here at KAF or wherever they may be.”

-30-

You can find more news and features about the district on our [homepage](#). You can also follow us on [Facebook](#) and find interesting photos about the district on our [Flickr page](#).